



# THE METRICAL PSALTER OF KING JAMES VI

## AND ITS CONNECTION WITH THE ONE PRESENTLY IN USE

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### PART II

THE Psalter like the Service Book is a well printed volume. The pages in my copy are about ten and a half inches in height.<sup>1</sup> The text of the Psalms is in black letter, with Roman for the other portions. It is difficult to say how many copies still exist. The late Dr. Christie, minister of St. Andrew's Church, Edinburgh, estimated that about a hundred copies of the Service Book (Laud's Liturgy) were in existence in 1937 ; but many of these lack the metrical Psalter, and I have yet to come across a single copy of the latter which has not been bound up with the Service Book. The printing has been well done and I have noticed only one misprint : "with" for "wish" in the 50th Psalm, verse 9. The verses are printed double, that is, what would be eight lines in our Psalter is printed as four in King James. Thus Psalm iv, verse 3, in our version is printed as follows :

But know, that for himself the Lord  
the godly man doth choose :  
The Lord, when I on him do call,  
to hear will not refuse.

In King James :

But know that for himself, the Lord, the godly man selects,  
and when to him I humbly call, he never me neglects.

It will be noticed that in our version the first and third lines begin with a capital letter, indicating that the full line is one of fourteen syllables. In King James the first letter in the full verse is the one which is so marked,

<sup>1</sup> The copy of the Service Book in the possession of the writer was purchased while he was serving with the Army in England in 1941, and was used by him at several united services there. It must have been one of the first to be printed, as the page containing Psalm 109 (Prose Psalter) is "inset." It bears the Royal Arms of King Charles on the cover and may have been meant for use in the Chapel Royal. It is the only copy known to have the collection of "Certaine Prayers" following the Psalms.

and though quite a number of other words have capitals, pronouns relating to the Almighty are printed without them, as is the case in the version we still use.

As we all know there are duplicates in the Psalter and it may not be out of place to see how our translators dealt with them. Psalms 14 and 53 are practically identical in the prose version, except for one verse.<sup>1</sup> In the 1650 metrical version three of the verses are exactly alike in each ; but there are differences in the others.<sup>2</sup> In King James, the first two verses are alike in each, and in the 7th verse the only change is from "thine" in the 14th to "thy" in the 53rd.

The last five verses of the 40th Psalm are the same as those which compose the 70th ; but neither in our present Psalter nor in that of King James are the metrical versions the same.<sup>3</sup> The 108th Psalm is made up of the last five verses of the 57th and the last eight of the 60th. Of the verses taken from the 57th not one is reproduced in our present book ; but those from the 60th are given with only minor differences.<sup>4</sup> Thus the lines from the 60th,

" O God, which hadest us cast off  
this thing wilt thou not do ? "

become in the 108th,

" O God, thou who hadst cast us off  
this thing wilt thou not do ? "

In King James, on the other hand, all are different, except the 7th and 8th verses of the 108th which correspond exactly to the 6th and 7th verses of the 60th.<sup>5</sup> An interesting problem arises with regard to the 70th

<sup>1</sup> Verse 5 in Psalm 53 is quite different from verses 5 and 6 in Psalm 14.

<sup>2</sup> There are 24 lines in the 14th Psalm and 28 lines in the 53rd.

<sup>3</sup> In the Reformation Psalter the 40th Psalm is in common metre and the 70th in long. The two versions are quite different.

<sup>4</sup> In the Reformation Psalter, there is little similarity in the metrical versions of these Psalms.

<sup>5</sup> In the case of " King James his book " the differences may be due to the fact that there were two persons, the King and Alexander, engaged in the work of versifying, and in the present Psalter the differences may be due to the various revisions which the work had to undergo before it was finally adopted. In 1647 the General Assembly appointed John Adamson, Principal of Edinburgh University, Thomas Crawford, Professor in the same College, John Row, afterwards Principal of King's College, Aberdeen, and John Nevay, minister at Loudon, who was banished after the restoration, to revise " Rowe's Paraphrase." Each of the first three was to revise forty Psalms and the last thirty. It will be seen that no two of the "duplicate" Psalms were dealt with by the same reviser. In 1648 Adamson and Crawford were asked by the Assembly "to revise the labours of Mr. Zachary Boyd upon the other Scripturall Songs," it being the intention to add some of these to the Psalter ; but nothing seems to have been done in that direction. Adamson was a minister, having been ordained to Liberton in 1609. Crawford was a layman and, according to a contemporary, "was profoundly skilled in theology and a man of the greatest piety and integrity." These two must have had the confidence of their colleagues, for they were chosen to represent Edinburgh at a conference of the Universities of Scotland in 1648.

Psalm. In our present Psalter the first version is in short metre and there is "Another of the same" in common metre.<sup>1</sup> In the Reformation Psalter this Psalm is in long metre, but in King James it is in short, and there need be no doubt that it was the royal book which suggested the short metre form in ours, though only two of the sixteen lines which make up the Psalm are the same in both books. This portion of the Psalter was revised, as has been said by Thomas Crawford<sup>2</sup> (in all probability an Elder of the Church), the only layman on the committee of revision, and he may have been responsible for the short metre version. He was a Professor in the University of Edinburgh of which he wrote a history.<sup>3</sup> In this he refers to King James as a "happy peaceable Prince, of which those who survived him were the more sensible in respect of the woful tragedies acted upon these lands after his removal." We are probably not far wrong in assuming that the Professor's regard for the King was extended to the King's Psalter. He died a "venerable man" in 1662.

One of the first things which strikes the reader is that the 1636 Psalter offers a much larger selection of singable psalms than does the Reformation Psalter, which it was meant to displace. The older book had no fewer than thirty-eight different forms of metre and many of these were such that it must have been difficult for the ordinary worshipper to memorise them. It has to be remembered that the Scots like the English were to a considerable extent an unlettered people, and it seems quite evident that few of the peculiars could have been in regular use in ordinary congregations. As these formed a large proportion of the whole, the result was that much of the Psalter was neglected. Doubtless it was this, as much as anything else, which led the General Assembly in 1648 to insist that every psalm should appear in a common metre version, though there might be

<sup>1</sup> There are five short metre Psalms in our present collection. Of these the 25th and 45th were in the same form in the Reformation Psalter.

<sup>2</sup> Crawford appears to have been a most remarkable man and, as no particulars of him appear in any of our Scottish Church histories, a few notes may not be out of place. He matriculated at St. Leonard's College, St. Andrews, in 1618, and graduated there in 1621. Four years later he was a candidate for a Professorship of Philosophy at Edinburgh. He was not successful; but in 1626 he was elected Professor of Humanity there, in place of Samuel Rutherford who had to leave, "having incurred some scandal on account of an irregular marriage." In 1630 he resigned his chair to become Rector of Edinburgh High School, an office he held to 1640, when he returned to the University as Professor of Philosophy and also Professor of Mathematics. A later historian of the University (Professor Dalziel) describes him as "one of the most laborious, successful and celebrated teachers who ever appeared in this University" (*History*, II, 188). Among other things he did for the College was the designing of the lettering to be put "upon the board of Benefactors." This was in 1658. In 1633, along with Principal Adamson and William Drummond of Hawthornden, he arranged the ceremonial to be observed at the visit of Charles I to the City of Edinburgh. He wrote a Latin Grammar which seems to have been in wide use, and also "Notes and Observations on Mr. George Buchanan's History of Scotland," which was published in 1708.

<sup>3</sup> This was not published until 1808.



another in long, short or peculiar metre. Hence it is that to-day we have a hundred and fifty common metre Psalms in our Psalter.<sup>1</sup>

King James, judging from what he left in MS., had a liking for "peculiar," and we have to remember that in the churches and chapels where he worshipped the standard of musical culture was probably much higher than in the generality of congregations. Alexander, however, wisely dispensed to a great extent with peculiar. There are only ten different metres in his book including long, common and short.

We have to keep in mind that the new book was meant for use in England and Ireland as well as in Scotland, and the old Anglican Psalter had only fifteen forms of metre. South of the Tweed Psalm singing was at a low ebb and common metre tunes seem to have been the only ones in regular use.<sup>2</sup> These things doubtless played their part in persuading Alexander to cut down the metrical forms so drastically. In his book there are 159 Psalm versions, nine of them Psalms having what he calls "Another of the same," a phrase transferred to our Psalter. In our present book there are 163 Psalm versions. We have the whole 150 in common metre. There are four Psalms in long metre, Nos. 6, 100, 102 and 145, the last three of which appear in this form in the Reformation Psalter.<sup>3</sup> In King James there are only two, Nos. 51 and 100. Then in our present book we have five in short metre, Nos. 25, 45, 50, 67 and 70. In King James there are three, Nos. 25, 70 and 134, the last having only eight lines.<sup>4</sup> These have all left their mark on the version we still use.

<sup>1</sup> How seldom, if ever, is the second version of the hundredth psalm sung, or the first version of the hundred and twenty-fourth.

<sup>2</sup> It must not be thought that things were always better in Scotland. In a pamphlet published in 1653, entitled "*Causes of the Lord's Wrath*," it is stated that one of these "Causes" is the fact that many who attend church do not take any interest in the singing of the Psalms. Writing in 1881 the Rev. William Milroy (1831-1893), minister of the (former) Reformed Presbyterian Church, Penpont, mentions that preaching in a city church he gave out part of the long metre version of the 102nd Psalm. "The precentor, rising and looking grimly over the pulpit book-board, said, 'I canna sing lang metre.'" The date is not given; but was after 1862, when Mr. Milroy was admitted as a licentiate by the Synod.—*Scotch Communion Services*, xxii.

<sup>3</sup> The long metre version of the 102nd Psalm is interesting, in that it was turned into this form by Mr. John Row who revised this section of the Psalter at the request of the General Assembly. He took William Barton's version in common metre and added two syllables to every second line. It requires no great skill to detect the insertions. Barton complained with some bitterness of the "piracies of the Scots." He was so annoyed that he wrote an entirely new version of the Psalm for his Psalter.

<sup>4</sup> The short metre version of the 70th Psalm in our book may possibly be from the pen of Professor Crawford, above mentioned. It is a remarkable fact that of its sixteen lines, twelve are exactly the same as the corresponding lines of the common metre version, the second, third and fourth lines of each verse. The first lines in the second version have, of course, eight syllables while those of the first have only six each; but the "subtractions" are easily "spotted." The first line of the Psalm is somewhat differently rendered in the two versions.

Then we have four "peculiar" in our present Psalter, Nos. 124, 136, 143 and 148, which appear in similar, though not identical forms in the Reformation Psalter. Nos. 136 and 148 are in the same metre. As has been said, King James seems to have had a special liking for "peculiar" and eleven are given in the 1636 book : Nos. 50, 111, 112, 113, 120, 121, 122, 124, 127, 136 and 148. Of these the two last and the 124th are in the same metres as in our present Psalter and the whole eleven are in similar metres in the Reformation version. It is worth while noticing that with the exception of the 50th all the peculiar in King James are to be found in the last forty Psalms and that there is "Another of the same" attached to all except the 136th and 148th.<sup>1</sup>

The 50th Psalm is in a stanza of six lines of which the first four have ten syllables and the last two eleven, the rhymes being a, a ; b, b ; c, c. The rhyme in the last two lines is always on the penultimate syllable, dearly clearly, brother mother, mountains fountains. The 111th and 120th have stanzas of twelve lines, each of six syllables and rhyming a, a ; b, c, c, b ; d, d ; f, e, e, f. The 112th, 113th and 127th are in six-line stanzas each line having eight syllables. In the first the rhyme is a, b ; a, b ; c, c ; and in the other two, a, a ; b, c, c, b. The 121st and the 122nd have also stanzas of six lines. These are arranged 668, 668 ; but the rhyming is different in the two psalms, the first being a, b, b, c, c ; the other a, a, b, c, c, b. The second version of the 124th Psalm in King James is reproduced in our present book as the first version with but little alteration. The second version of the 100th Psalm in our book is sometimes ascribed to Zachary Boyd ; but his lines owe a good deal to the Psalter of 1636.

The tunes in the book number thirty-six and are given without harmonies. Almost every Psalm has either a tune for itself, or a note indicating where a suitable tune is to be found. There is only one ordinary long metre tune in the book, that is the "Old Hundredth." The tune, attached to the 51st Psalm is in double long metre, that attached to the 25th Psalm is in double short metre, and all the others except those attached to "peculiar" are in double common metre.

Most, if not all, of the tunes have been taken from older Psalters<sup>2</sup> and some of them are quite well known to-day, as for example, the Old 44th (D.C.M.), the Old 100th (L.M.) and the Old 124th (P.M.). Others which have found a place in modern psalters and hymn books are the Old 18th (D.C.M.), Old 25th (D.S.M.), Old 50th (P.M.), Old 81st (D.C.M.)

<sup>1</sup> It may have been thought that these were so well known that it was not necessary to provide alternative versions.

<sup>2</sup> Many of these tunes with harmonies will be found in the reprints of the Scots Reformation Psalter (1635) already mentioned.

and Old 137th (D.C.M.). Once or twice there is a "slip up" in the matter of tunes. Thus, the 136th has the note, "Sing this as the 148th Psalm"; but when we turn to the latter we find that there is no tune there. The same can be said of the 111th, which is to be sung as the 120th, though the latter is tuneless. There is no direction at all attached to the 134th Psalm; though there is only one tune in the book suitable for its short metre, that appended to the 25th Psalm.

A certain amount of obscurity attaches to the direction to sing Psalm 56 "as the Lamentation." The "Lamentation" was a hymn which had appeared in the Old Reformation Psalter. It may have been intended to include it in this book, but if so the intention was not carried out.<sup>1</sup> In the old Psalter, however, "The Lamentation" is in long metre, whereas Psalm 56 in King James is in common. The 70th Psalm, which is in short metre in King James, has the direction, "Sing this as the 30th Psalm." It is to be hoped that this was never done as the 30th is in common metre. Another error may be due to a misprint. This is the direction to sing the 60th Psalm (common) as the 50th (peculiar). Probably 30th is meant.

One of the chief features of the 1636 Psalter, and one which might have been copied in ours with advantage, is the division of the longer Psalms into "singable" portions. These portions usually run to four or five double verses,<sup>2</sup> recalling the words of Burns in "The Ordination,"

"O' double verse come gie us fower  
An' skirl up the Bangor"

Similar divisions appeared in the English Reformation Psalter, though not in the Scottish one. Rous introduced them into his Psalter, as did Tate and Brady at a later date.

The division in King James is not the same in every Psalm. Thus the 37th has four sections each with five stanzas, while the 55th has three sections each of four. The 39th, with seven and a half stanzas, is divided into two, while the 31st which has twelve, and the 88th which has eleven, are not divided at all. The 94th is unequally divided into two portions of five and seven stanzas to fit the sense; but there are others where the division appears to have been made mechanically, there being no attempt to divide according to the meaning. Thus, the 89th Psalm has the division

<sup>1</sup> It has already been said that in the MS book left by King James there is a version of "The Lamentation."

<sup>2</sup> All available evidence points to the fact that larger portions of the Psalter were sung in the 17th and 18th centuries than is the case to-day. In the Book of Common Order it is directed that on the occasion of a General Fast, the 51st Psalm "shall be sung whole at the Morning Service and the 6th Psalm at the Afternoon Service." Patrick Walker tells that Alexander Peden, the well known Covenanting minister, while officiating at a house conventicle first read over the 59th Psalm and then with the congregation sang through the whole seventeen verses.



between the second and third parts at verse 16, though verse 17 is needed to complete the sense of what has gone before.

Another thing which should be noticed is that, especially in the first part of the Psalter, almost every verse in the prose has a corresponding verse in the metrical.<sup>1</sup> In our present book it is no uncommon thing to find two verses of the original being compressed into one. For example, the eight verses of the 121st Psalm are reduced to four in our version. But, while this compression is not unknown in King James, it is not by any means so often resorted to as in ours. Thus, the 18th Psalm, which has fifty verses in the original, has also fifty in King James, but only forty-two in ours. It is interesting to observe how the compilers of the 1650 Psalter have followed the earlier one in manipulating the lines of the 119th Psalm, in order to have three double verses of common metre in each portion.

Occasionally there is a slip in the numbering. Thus the 22nd (last) verse of the 38th Psalm is not numbered at all, though it appears as, "Make haste O Lord to give me help, who my salvation art." More often we find an extra verse. Thus in the 40th Psalm, the second half of the tenth verse appears as the eleventh, and from there to the end the numbers are wrong. In the 53rd Psalm, the fifth and sixth verses (last two) are expanded to four in the metrical psalm, the last verse being numbered eight. Psalm 90 is given an extra verse (the tenth being expanded to form both the tenth and eleventh) and so are several others.

Reference has been made to the objection that there were a number of words in this Psalter which could not be understood by the people as a whole. Many of these were removed, but some were allowed to remain. Among these were "obloquie" (Ps. 22, 6), "torrents" (Ps. 69, 24), "billows" (Ps. 42, 8). The objectors had evidently forgotten that the last of these was to be found in the prose. In addition, there were other words left in which could not have been well known to the ordinary man in the 17th century. "Imperial," "eminent," "antiquity," "importuned" and "oracle" (meaning "sacred place") are examples.

The versifier has also used terms we do not usually associate with Holy Scripture; such as "mutiny" (Ps. 83, 2), "dive" (Ps. 26, 2), "knotty" meaning "rugged" (Ps. 68, 16), "butte" meaning "reproach" (Ps. 79, 4), "artificial" (Ps. 135, 17), "gallants" (Ps. 148, 12), "prodigious" (Ps. 106, 39), "suter,"<sup>2</sup> and many others. One word the

<sup>1</sup> The 20th verse of the 72nd Psalm in the prose version does not appear in our present metrical Psalter at all. In King James it appears not as a verse, but as a rubric, in this form. "The Prayers of *David* the sonne of *Jesse* are ended."

<sup>2</sup> For suitor, in the sense of petitioner. Probably by many it would be considered as meaning a shoemaker. The word is found in Ps. 14, 2 and in Ps. 53, 2. "Town," a word not found in the prose of the Psalter at all, appears in the metrical version of Psalm 127.



writer seems to have been specially fond of is "straight" which is introduced into quite a number of Psalms. Thus Psalm 30, 7 :

"But when thou once didst hide thy face,  
it straight did trouble me,"

or the 95th :

"O come and let us worship straight."<sup>1</sup>

We find too the word "league" used where the prose has "covenant." This is not due to any distaste for the latter word, which had not any sinister meaning for royalists when this version was first penned, and we find it in other psalms.

We have seen how Calderwood attacked the 1631 edition because of its "poetical conceits." These were not all removed from the later edition, as the following examples show :

"Soft pearls of quickening showers" (Psalm 72, 7).

"The feathered bands that fan the air" (Psalm 104, 12).

"We in an extasie entranced" (Psalm 126, 1).

Occasionally we find that the versifier has not been afraid to make his own translation from the Hebrew. Thus, in Psalm 42 where our Psalter has "ev'n from Mizar hill," as it is in the prose of the authorised version, the older Psalter has "from the little hill."

There are a few out-of-date words such as "parcell" in the sense of small portion (Ps. 38, 7). "Whereas" is used fairly often where we would use "where'er." "Presume" in the sense of "presumptuous" in Psalm 30, 6. In a Psalter, prepared by Scots, we might have expected some Scots words or phrases. These are however very few. "Earst" in the sense of "early" occurs several times. "Targe" is used for "shield" in Psalm 91. "Into," still used in Fife in the sense of "in," has this meaning in Psalm 23, "Into the paths of righteousness," and in the 127th Psalm, "But they shall speak into the gate." In the MS psalms which King James left there are, as has been said, quite a number of Scottish words ; but these have been carefully excluded from the printed editions.

We pass now to deal with the connection of the Psalter of King James with that presently in use in the Church of Scotland. When in 1647 the General Assembly appointed four persons, three ministers and a layman, to examine and amend the Metrical Psalter of Francis Rous (which had already been subjected to an exhaustive revision by a committee of the Westminster Divines), the Court recommended the four brethren "to make use of the travels of Rowallan, Master Zachary Boyd or of any other

<sup>1</sup> "Straight" has been introduced to the first verse of the 119th Psalm in our version, though it does not appear in the prose.

on that subject; but especially of our own Paraphrase (Reformation Psalter), that what they find better in any of these works may be chosen." It will be noticed that they did not mention "King James his version"; but it is a somewhat remarkable fact that more was incorporated into the new book from it than from two, if not from all three, of those which were mentioned.

Many years ago the late Dr. Rorison, Minister of Dalserf, made an interesting analysis of our present Psalter, with a view to tracing every line to its source.<sup>1</sup> There are just over 9,000 lines (there are about 500 more in King James), and Dr. Rorison succeeded in tracing close on five thousand of these. He identified 338 as being from the Reformation Psalters, English and Scottish, 49 as being from Mure of Rowallan, 516 from King James and 754 from Zachary Boyd. He is wrong in the case of Mure of Rowallan, whose contribution was somewhat greater than he makes it out to be. I, too, have made an examination of our present Psalter, and my calculations show that 572 lines are taken from King James, of which by far the greater number are in both editions, though 24 lines are to be found in the 1631 edition only. This would seem to indicate that both editions were in the hands of the later revisers. This difference in calculation between Dr. Rorison and myself is due in part to the fact that, where the change is from "my" to "mine," "thy" to "thine," "ye" to "you," "these" to those" or *vice versa*, I have disregarded it. Where the word has been changed in form only, I have not considered it as altered at all. Thus in the 84th Psalm King James has "a house wherein to rest." Zachary Boyd altered this to "an house wherein to rest," and he is credited with the line by Dr. Rorison. As the present Psalter contains some nine thousand lines, it will be seen that, even if no more than these five hundred and seventy-two lines were taken account of, the contribution of King James could not be considered negligible, amounting as it does to about one line in every sixteen or thereby. But in addition to these five hundred and seventy-two lines, which are identical with those in our present Psalm book, there are over fourteen hundred other lines which, though not exactly the same, are markedly similar. Dr. Rorison takes notice of some of these, but only of some. Where he found a line in our metrical psalms which was the same as one say in Rous, Barton, Mure, or Boyd, all of whom could draw on earlier versions, he took no notice (except occasionally) of the source, unless the source was exactly the same. Thus he credits Barton with the line, "He shall be like a tree that grows" (Ps. 1), although both the Reformation Psalter and James have the line, "He shall be like a tree

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Rorison gives the number of lines as 8,947, an impossible figure as the number must be a multiple of four.

that grow'th." Where our present book has lines which are not the same as any in earlier versions, but which are similar to some found there, he indicated in some instances where such took their beginning. The following lines, taken at random, will show how King James was used by succeeding versifiers.

- Ps. 10, 18. "May so oppress no more" (King James).  
 "May them oppress no more" (Westminster Revisers).
- Ps. 40, 2. "He brought me from the horrid pit  
 and from entangling clay." (King James.)  
 "He took me from a fearful pit  
 and from the miry clay." (Francis Rous.)
- Ps. 40, 18. "Thou my deliverer art and help  
 my God no tarrying make." (King James.)  
 "Thou art my help and Saviour  
 my God no tarrying make." (Zachary Boyd.)
- Ps. 50, 1. "The mighty God the Lord hath said." (King James.)  
 "The mighty God the Lord hath spoke." (Bay Psalter.)<sup>1</sup>

In each case quoted, the second form is what appears in our present psalter, and the persons, whose names are appended, are those to whom the lines are credited by Dr. Rorison.

Occasionally however the Scottish Revisers have "improved" the royal lines, even after others had tried their hands on them.

This in the 2nd Psalm we have the following sequences :

8. "Ask me and thou for heritage" (King James) ;  
 "Ask me and for thine heritage" (Zachary Boyd) ;  
 "Ask of me and for heritage" (Present Psalter) ;

or in the 5th Psalm,

4. "For thou art not a God who pleased" (King James) ;  
 "For thou art not a God that will" (William Barton) ;  
 "For thou art not a god that doth" (Present Psalter).

We must not forget, however, when dealing with lines which appear in our Psalter only slightly different from those in King James, that James too drew to some extent on earlier versions, though so far as I have been able to find out, he did not do so to anything like the extent that later writers have drawn on him. All the lines quoted from the 1631 and 1636 editions of his psalter are not necessarily "pure" James, though by far the greater number are.

<sup>1</sup> The Bay Psalter was the first book printed in America, being published there in 1640 by the English Puritan colonists.



Of the fourteen hundred similar lines in our version and that of King James, over six hundred differ in one word only. For example, the line in the 24th Psalm, "and who within His holy place," is from the royal book, but there the first word is "or" not "and." The line in the 80th Psalm, 19th verse, "And so we shall be saved," is from the 1631 edition; but there the last word is "safe." The well known words, "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness," are paraphrased in ours, "In beauty of his holiness"; in King James, "In beauty of true holiness." In the 84th Psalm, the line in King James, "that art my God and King" reappears in ours with "who" instead of "that." We all know that verse (19th) of the 34th Psalm, which runs:

"The troubles that afflict the just, in numbers many be;<sup>1</sup>  
But yet at length out of them all, the Lord doth set him free."

It appears in exactly the same form in King James except that the word "last" appears there instead of "length."

Then, there are over 240 cases where the revisers have kept the words which were in King James, but have altered their order. Thus, in the 42nd Psalm we have the lines,

"I to God's house did go with them, with voice of praise and joy."

In ours, the last line has become "with voice of joy and praise," the alteration having been made by Francis Rous. In the 8th Psalm, King James' line, "which were ordained by Thee," has become in ours, "which were by Thee ordained." In the 26th Psalm, the line "I have not sat with persons vain" has been turned to "with persons vain I have not sat"; not altogether an improvement. Even better known are the lines from the 92nd Psalm, "Unto the Lord to render thanks; it is a comely thing," which have been altered in ours, "To render thanks unto the Lord, etc." Sometimes one may get a little amusement from the change. In the 4th Psalm, "How long will ye O sons of men" has been turned into "O ye the sons of men! how long." In the 90th Psalm, the lines "And let the beauty of the Lord, our God upon us be," has had the order of the last three words altered to "be us upon."

Then we have over 500 lines in the 1650 Psalter where the similarity to the older one, though less pronounced, is still evident. Take the first

<sup>1</sup> When serving with the army "furth of Scotland" in the present war I was surprised to hear an officer (the mess being predominantly English) repeat this line. Looking round, wondering who the speaker was, I saw it was the Colonel. On asking how he (a son of the vicarage) knew our metrical Psalms he replied, "Because I am a son-in-law of the Manse."

line of the 76th Psalm associated in covenanting story with Drumclog:<sup>1</sup> "In Judah's land God is well known." The line in James is not so good: "In Judah God he is well known." This appears in the 1631 book, and in 1636 it was altered to, "In Judah God is known, his name," the second line being given thus, "In Israel is great," suggesting the second line in ours, "his name's in Isr'el great." The last two lines in the 13th Psalm in the later book read,

"Because he hath his bounty shown  
to me abundantly."

Who can doubt that these have been "lifted" from King James, though neither of them is the same,

"Because his bounty hath to me, abundantly been shown."

In the 42nd Psalm King James' line, "As with a sword within my bones" has become in ours, "'Tis as a sword within my bones." There is a change both in order and an alteration of one word, but the two lines are substantially the same.

The older form of the 7th and 8th verses of the 29th Psalm is,

"The Lord's voice parts the flames of fire, and doth the desert shake:  
the wilderness of Kadesh oft to shake, the Lord doth make."

The later one runs,

God's voice divides the flames of fire,  
the desert it doth shake.  
The Lord doth make the wilderness,  
of Kadesh all to shake.

There can be little doubt that the revisers, who gave us the latter, had the former before them. The change in the first line from "Lord" to "God" is not in accordance with the original.

Perhaps an ever better example of such minor changes is to be found in the 75th Psalm, not so often sung now as in former days.

To Thee O God do we give thanks,  
we do give thanks to Thee.  
Because Thy wondrous works declare  
thy great name near to be.

<sup>1</sup> It may be safely affirmed that the story about the Covenanters singing this Psalm to the tune of "Martyrs," as they advanced to the attack, is not true. The nature of the ground they had to cross effectually prevented any singing. Sir Walter Scott seems to have been the first to tell the tale and he has been followed by quite a number of others. This Psalm was however sung at a great gathering of Covenanters held at the Cross of Douglas, Lanarkshire, immediately after the Revolution of 1688. Rev. Alexander Shields, who presided, mentioned that the same Psalm had been sung at the Cross of Edinburgh "by famous Mr. Robert Bruce at the break of the Spanish Armada." Patrick Walker. *Vindication of Cameron's Name*. In the Reformation Psalter this Psalm is in lines of eight syllables, arranged in seven line stanzas.

In King James,

To Thee, O God we give due thanks  
we give due thanks to Thee.  
for that Thy wondrous works declare,  
thy name most near to be.

The first verse of the 4th Psalm in our version runs thus,

Give ear unto me when I call,  
God of my righteousness.  
Have mercy, hear my prayer, thou hast  
enlarged me in distress.

In King James,

Thou of my righteousness the God,  
when as I call give ear :  
thou hast enlarged me from distress ;  
my suit in mercy hear.

Not one line as it stands can be said to be the same as its neighbour in the other book ; but a little examination shows that the first two lines in King James have simply been rearranged to form the first two in ours. The words of the third line of the old have been reproduced, but have been divided between the third and fourth lines of the new. Another instance of a similar change is to be found in the 91st Psalm, 1st verse, where King James's " In the Almighty's shadow still, securely shall abide" has become " Under the shade of Him that is th' Almighty shall abide." The first two lines of this verse it may be said are the same in both versions.

Sometimes too we find a line of the present embedded, so to speak, in two lines of the older version. We all know the line from the 24th Psalm, "Whose hands are clean, whose heart is pure." You will look for it in vain in King James, but you will find the following,

" Even he whose hands are clean, whose heart  
is pure, who hath forborn."

The following verses of well known Psalms illustrate the kind of changes often made by the revisers. The 2nd verse of the 65th Psalm in King James runs thus,

The man is blest, whom thou dost choose,<sup>1</sup>  
and mak'st approach to Thee,  
that he within thy holy courts,  
a dweller still may be.

In ours, the first line has the same words, but in a different order. The

<sup>1</sup> This line appears in the Scots Reformation Psalter ; but the other three lines in the verse there, show no resemblance to those in King James.



second line is exactly the same. The third line has "thy courts O Lord" instead of "thy holy courts." The fourth line has the same words differently arranged.

Or later the 84th Psalm,

Yea, even the Sparrow hath found out  
 a house wherein to rest,  
 The swallow also for herself  
 hath purchased a nest ;  
 Even at thine Altars, where she safe  
 her young ones forth may bring,  
 O thou Almighty Lord of hosts,  
 that art my God and king.

In ours the first line is slightly different. The second has "an" instead of "a." The next two lines are the same. The fifth has, "Even thine own altars." The sixth and seventh are the same. The eighth has "who" instead of "that."

Only in one Psalm, the 117th, which consists of eight lines, have I failed to find any trace of the older version. In the 126th Psalm such resemblances as there are may be accidental.<sup>1</sup>

No metrical psalm has been more often dissected than the 23rd ; and I have noted that quite a number of the dissectors have failed to do justice to King James. Thus a recent writer makes no reference whatever to him, ascribing the line "shall surely follow me" to Rous, though it appeared in the royal book years before Rous wrote. Another modern writer ascribes the line, "within the paths of righteousness," to the Westminster Revisers. In King James the line runs, "Into the paths of righteousness," the Scots "into" being used where other persons would say "in." The Westminster Revisers altered this to, "on in the paths of righteousness," an alteration which has not an improvement. The Scottish Revisers reverted to "into" and this is what appears in the edition printed by Evan Tyler for the General Assembly in 1650. The line appears to have been altered later. The line in King James, "And dost with oil anoint my head," was changed by Mure of Rowallan to "With oil Thou dost anoint my head," and the Westminster Revisers put the line into its present form.

<sup>1</sup> There is something to be said for the view, that the 126th Psalm in our Psalter was written by Mr. John Nevay, who revised this section of the Psalter for the General Assembly. The third verse in King James opens thus, "The Lord who only mighty is, has done for us great things," the line in our version, "The Lord hath done great things for us," may have been taken from it. The last lines in ours, "He doubtless bringing back his sheaves, rejoicing shall return," may have been suggested by the older lines of King James, "Rejoicing doubtless shall return, with sheaves to serve his need."

King James gave us,  
 Though through the vale of death's dark shade  
 I walk, I fear no ill.  
 Thou art with me, thy rod and staff  
 afford me comfort still,

four lines which suggest a good deal in our version, and even more in that of Zachary Boyd.

With regard to the peculiars, we cannot find that the revisers got anything from King James except perhaps the words "fowler's snare" in the 124th Psalm. The Scottish Revisers made two alterations in the hundredth Psalm. The original, written by William Kethe, began the third verse with the words, "The Lord, ye know, is God indeed," and this is still used in England. The Revisers altered this to, "Know that the Lord is God indeed." They may have got the first part of the line from King James, whose version runs, "Know that the Lord is our great God." The other change was the substitution of "mirth" for "fear" in the second verse. Here King James has "gladness," as the prose has also.

There will be different opinions as to the value of the changes made by the Revisers. Undoubtedly, there were many cases where these made were for the better; but there are others where in my view they were not. Here is one of the latter sort taken almost at random. Psalm 31, 3.

Because Thou art my rock and thee  
 I for my fortress take,  
 Therefore do thou me lead and guide  
 ev'n for thine own name's sake.

I prefer the older version.

For thou my rock and fortress art,  
 who me secure doth make :  
 Lord, therefore lead and guide me still,  
 even for thine own name's sake.

There are few finer stanzas in any metrical Psalter than the 25th and 26th verses of the 18th Psalm in King James :

To him that is to mercy given  
 thou merciful wilt be;  
 and thou wilt upright be with him,  
 that upright is with thee.  
 Thou to the pure, to be most pure  
 wilt show thyself in love;  
 and thou with them that froward art  
 wilt likewise froward prove.

Compare these lines with the corresponding ones in the present Psalter and see what has been lost.

Thou gracious to the gracious art  
to upright men upright,  
Pure to the pure, froward thou kythst  
unto the froward wight.

I have shown that much in our present Psalter has been taken from King James and that is true of the book as a whole. But it is well known that in most of our churches to-day only a small selection from the Metrical Psalter is sung. Some of the Psalms are regarded as being quite unsuitable for worship, while of others only a few verses are ever used. Now, if what may be called the "more singable" psalms, those in general use, are examined, it will be found that a very considerable number of them come from the Psalter we are considering.

Here are a few specimens, chosen more or less at random.

Ps. 19. 7. The Lord his law converts the soul,  
and perfect is always.  
his testimony is most sure,  
and makes the simple wise.

Ps. 20. 5. We will in thy salvation joy  
in our God's name we will  
our banners boldly reare .  
the Lord, all thy desires fulfil.

Ps. 25 (Short Metre).

1. To thee I lift my soule,  
O Lord I trust in Thee,  
2. my God let me not be asham'd ;  
nor foes triumph o'er me.  
3. Let none of them have shame,  
who do on thee depend :  
but who without a cause transgresse,  
let shame on them attend.

Ps. 66. 1. All lands with loud and joyful noise,  
to God your voices raise :  
2. sing forth the honour of his name,  
and glorious make his praise.  
3. Say unto God how terrible  
in all thy works art thou ;  
by thy great power, thy foes to thee  
shall all be brought to bow.



- Ps. 95.    5. To Him the spacious Sea belongs  
                     and he the same did make;  
                     yea, and the dry land from his hands  
                     a form at first did take.
6. O come and let us worship straight,  
                     and bow us downe withal,  
                     and on our knees before the Lord  
                     our maker let us fall.

- Ps. 98.    1. Sing to the Lord, a song new made,  
                     he wondrous things hath done:  
                     his right hand and his holy arme  
                     him victory hath won.
2. The Lord hath his salvation made  
                     to be most clearly knowne,  
                     his righteousness in heathen's sight,  
                     he openly hath shown.

I have mentioned that the 121st and 122nd Psalms were in peculiar metres in King James ; but in both cases there is "Another of the same."

Psalm 121.

1. I to these hills will lift mine eyes, whence cometh all mine ayde:  
                     my help is from the Lord above, the heaven and earth that made.

It has been stated by some writers that our version of the 122nd Psalm is by Mure of Rowallan. It undoubtedly owes something to him and three of his lines are incorporated. King James supplies two, "to Israel's testimony there" and "within thy walls remain." A third is almost the same, "prosperity contain," which last word is nearer the original than is the word "retain" of the present version.

From the laying aside of the Reformation Psalter in 1650 until the introduction of Paraphrases in 1781, the Psalter was the sole medium of congregational praise in the Church of Scotland and so occasions, which to-day would be marked with specially chosen Paraphrases or Hymns, had then to be marked by specially chosen Psalms, if they were marked at all. It is possible that till about the beginning of the 18th century some attempt was made in certain places to mark the greater days of the Christian Year by the use of such Psalms as the 16th at Easter, the 68th at Ascension, the 139th at Whitsunday and the 89th at Christmas ; but the day came when, except in a few places, even such scanty recogni-

tion was denied.<sup>1</sup> It was, however, the custom in all branches of the Scottish Church to mark sacramental occasions with special praise, and this, it need hardly be said, has continued (so far as the Psalter is concerned) to our own day.

In earlier days the last verses of the 144th Psalm were often sung in Scottish churches after the Sacrament of Baptism had been administered. This custom is still followed among those smaller parts of the Church in Scotland, who decline to use "human hymns." Readers of the life of the late Rev. J. P. Struthers of Greenock (Minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church there) may remember how more than once in his letters he refers to this Psalm as being sung on such occasions. In our version the 12th verse runs,

That as the plants our sons may be  
in youth grown up that are.  
Our daughters like to corner stones  
carved<sup>2</sup> like a palace fair.

There can be little doubt that these lines are from King James :

That like to plants our sons may be, in youth grown up that are,  
our daughters as the corner stones, that grace a Pallace rare.

Another "baptismal" Psalm was the 128th, seldom sung now in the Church of Scotland ; but still holding a place in the praises of some of the smaller communions. Again we see the likeness of King James's version to that still in use.

(Present) Thy wife shall as a fruitful vine  
by thy house'sides be found:  
Thy children like to olive-plants  
about thy table round.

<sup>1</sup> Despite the prohibition by the First Book of Discipline of such "days" there is no doubt that they continued to be noticed for years after the Reformation by ministers who preferred the views of Calvin, who allowed such festivals, to those of Knox who rejected them. In 1618, the General Assembly enjoined the observance of the four "days" mentioned above, together with Good Friday. In 1638, this injunction was declared "null and void"; but existing records show that in spite of this and of the prohibition of all "Holy Days" by the Westminster Directory, they continued to be observed. During the Second Episcopacy there was no prohibition of such observance, and as many of the Episcopal ministers (except in the South West) remained with their congregations, it may be taken that they continued to practise after the Revolution what they had practised before it. Even Presbyterian stalwarts like David Williamson (St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh) and Colonel Blackadder, who fought at Dunkeld, kept Christmas as a festival. See *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, Vol. III, Part I. Also McMillan: *Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church*, Chap. XXIV.

<sup>2</sup> The word "carved" is the equivalent of the Hebrew "Chatab" and is a better translation than the word "polished" in the prose version.

(King James)

“Thy wife shall as a fruitful vine, beside thy house be found,  
thy children like to olive plants, about thy table round.”

This Psalm it may be noted is given as the marriage Psalm in the Book of Common Order, the concluding rubric of that service reading, “Then is sung the cxxviii Psalme, Blessed are they they that feare the LORD, &c., or some other appertaining to the same purpose.”<sup>1</sup> Doubtless it was often sung at such services for it was not until the middle of the 18th century that the Church began to depart from its own rule that marriage should be “in the place appointed by authority for Publick Worship.”<sup>2</sup>

Turning to the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper there is little doubt that the use of the 43rd Psalm, as the opening praise on Communion Sundays in Scotland, was derived from the corresponding use of this Psalm in the Roman Mass.<sup>3</sup> Now-a-days it is customary to begin at the third verse, and the last two verses in King James version show the source of ours :

4. Then will I to God’s Altar goe, to God my only joy :  
yea and to praise thee, O my God, I will my harpe employ.
5. O why art thou (my soul) cast down, what doth disquiet thee :  
hope thou in God, him yet I’ll praise, my God and good to me.

Another Psalm associated with the Roman Mass and Scots Communion service is the 26th. In both cases it is sung from the 6th verse, but usually in the latter case only three verses are sung while in the former it is sung to the end. Here again King James contributes something to the form in our present Psalter, for the 8th verse in his rendering runs thus :

“The habitation of thy house, I, Lord, have loved well :  
and of thy honour too, the place where it doth use to dwell.”

The 116th Psalm, with its verse which declares, “I will take the cup of salvation,” has been part of the Roman Mass from early days and its use passed over into the Reformed Church. It is also found in the Book of Deer (one of the few fragments left of the liturgical works of the Celtic

<sup>1</sup> This is another instance of mediaeval usage being continued by the Reformed Church. This Psalm was part of the Marriage Service in the Sarum Rite which was used largely in Scotland before 1560. In 1549 the English Reformers introduced the 67th Psalm to the marriage service of the Book of Common Prayer as an alternative to the 128th.

<sup>2</sup> Westminster Directory.

<sup>3</sup> It is not without significance that the tune to which this Psalm is usually sung is called “Invocation.” It appears to have been written by R. A. Smith who published it in 1825.



Church in Scotland) as part of the Eucharistic Office.<sup>1</sup> King James has not contributed much to our present version ; but the last verse as he rendered it shows that he contributed something :

19. Amidst the Courts of his owne house, I will the same afford :  
in midst of thee Jerusalem, all ye praise still the Lord.

No Psalm has been used more widely at the Scottish Communion Service than the 103rd. In the Book of Common Order (Knox's Liturgy) the final rubric states, "The action being ended, the people sing the CIII Psalme 'My soule give laude, &c.' or some other of thanksgiving." Despite the permission to use another, the 103rd has kept its place in our traditional Communion order down to the present day. In the Roman use, this Psalm forms part of the "Votive Mass in time of War," and as such would probably be recited by the Abbot of Inchaffray, when he celebrated before the Scottish host on the morning of Bannockburn. Can there be any connection between these two uses ? Perhaps not, but there is no doubt of the connection of King James version with that we use to-day.

4. Who from destructione doth redeeme thy life when sinking down ;  
who doth with loving kindness thee, and tender mercies crowne.  
5. Who with the plenty of good things doth satisfie thy mouth ;  
so that (even as the Eagles is), renued is thy youth.

Another Psalm associated with our Scottish Communion Service may be noticed. This is the 24th, which was commonly sung by the congregation as the elders were bringing in the elements of bread and wine and setting them on the Holy Table.<sup>2</sup> The well known tune, "St. George's, Edinburgh"<sup>3</sup> was written for the last verses of this Psalm, and in many churches was used at this point of the service. When the singing of Paraphrases became general the 24th Psalm was displaced and the 35th Paraphrase used instead. The custom then arose of singing "Ye gates lift up your heads" at the beginning of the thanksgiving service on Communion Sunday evening, a somewhat unsuitable place for it. In some churches the opening verses of this Psalm are used as the first item of

<sup>1</sup> It also appears in the Book of Dimma, the Book of Mulling and the Stowe Missal, in each case being used after Communion. All three are formularies of the Celtic Church.

<sup>2</sup> This Scottish custom of carrying the Communion Elements into the Church during the service has its counterpart in the Greek Church, but is quite unknown in the Anglican and also in the Roman Church, except at Milan, where after a fashion it still exists. At one time it appears to have been the regular custom throughout Christendom.

<sup>3</sup> It was written by the Rev. Andrew Thomson, Minister of St. George's Church, Edinburgh, 1814-1831.

praise at the actual Communion Service as an alternative to the 43rd. The first two verses in King James show how much our present Psalter is indebted to his.

1. The earth belongs unto the Lord, and all that it containes :  
the world that is inhabited, and all that there remaines.
2. For the foundation of the same, he on the Seas did lay  
and also hath establish't it, upon the floudes to stay.

We may also refer to another example of the continuance of mediaeval usage in post-Reformation days. Writing *circa* 1615 William Cowper, Bishop of Galloway, states that "it was the ancient custom of our Church upon Sundays at afternoon to sing the 119th Psalm, which we think best to be retained in use, by singing a section of the same before Sermon and ane other after, and when it is ended, let the same be begun of new again." Nothing more suitable for use before and after Sermon than this Psalm with its emphasis on the law of the Lord is to be found in the Psalter.<sup>1</sup> The 119th Psalm was one of those which were fixed in the Roman Breviary for use at Prime as well as at the three minor "Hours," Terce, Sext and Nones. It is almost certain that it is this usage to which Cowper refers, for "ancient" to him must have meant a period before 1565 in which year he was born.

The present Psalter has drawn considerably on that of the King for its version of the longest Psalm, as may be seen in the first verses of the first and last portions.

King James)

1. Blest are all those, who undefil'd continue in the way,  
who in the Lord's most holy law, from walking never stray.

(Present)

1. Blessed are they that undefil'd, and straight are in the way  
Who in the Lord's most holy law do walk, and do not stray.

(King James)

169. O let the earnest cry I make, come near before thee, Lord,  
and understanding grant to me, according to thy word.

(Present)

169. O let my earnest pray'r and cry come near before thee, Lord:  
Give understanding unto me, according to thy word.

Such then is the Psalter of King James, which had much more influence on the one presently in use in Scotland and beyond the seas than is gener-

<sup>1</sup> Cowper wrote an exposition of this Psalm entitled "The Holy Alphabet of Zion's Scholars." It was published at London in 1613.

ally admitted.<sup>1</sup> We have still those who think that nothing good could possibly have come from such a quarter, but the preceding pages have shown, I think, that its mark is still easily recognised in the lines we sing.

Though I have spoken of this version as being the work of James I and VI, I have done so only because the printed copies give his name as that of the "Translator." There is no doubt whatever in my own mind that while he had a hand in the versification, the greater part is from the pen of another. James might be acclaimed as the "Principal Mover and Author of the work," as he was calculated by the translators of the Authorised Version of the Bible,<sup>2</sup> though it has never been suggested that he had any hand in the actual compiling of that great work. That it was due to him that the Psalter was versified is undoubted; but it is equally true to say that his share in the actual work was not so great as that of his colleague, the Earl of Stirling.<sup>3</sup>

The "Psalms of David translated by King James" suffered and still suffer from their association with that "Most High and Mighty Prince." Had Alexander published the book as his own work, it would probably have been more favourably received, though his companionship with the King made him suspect with the anti-Prelatic faction. Had he been a member of the Covenanting rather than the Court party, it is quite possible that we might have been using his Psalter to-day;<sup>4</sup> for there is no doubt that, whatever its defects may be, it marked an advance on those which were being used both in Scotland and in England when it was first published. As we have seen it was being used in some Scots congregations in the "thirties" of the 17th century, although the imprimatur of the Church had not been given to it.

Whatever may have been the abilities of King James as a poet, they were superior, it seems to me, to those of Zachary Boyd, many of whose lines appear in our present Psalter and much of whose work is simply doggerel, and poor doggerel at that. Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, may not be in the first rank of Scottish poets; but he is well ahead of those who, up to his time, had tried their hand at versifying the Psalter.

<sup>1</sup> In 1712 James Watson, who had been appointed a year earlier Queen's printer in Scotland, printed an octavo edition of the Book of Common Prayer at Edinburgh "with the Psalms in Metre translated by King James the VI." So far as is known, this is the only instance of the royal Psalter being printed in Scotland.

<sup>2</sup> In the Dedication by the Translators.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Henderson, addressing his fellow Divines at the Westminster Assembly, said that he had seen the Psalter of "Lord Stirling," but preferred that of Rous, though he thought the latter needed revision. Carruthers: *The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly*, 115.

<sup>4</sup> As has been shown, there was a widespread feeling that the Reformation Psalters had served their day and should be laid aside for something better.



He has been termed "second to Drummond alone among Scottish renaissance poets,"<sup>1</sup> and it is believed by some that John Milton was willing to learn from him.<sup>2</sup> A complete edition of his works, in two massive volumes, was published by the Scottish Text Society in 1921 and 1929. Strangely enough, the only reference to his work on the Psalms is given in a footnote, in which it is said that "Although Sir William Alexander took an active part in the translation of the Psalms, by King James . . . his precise share in James's translation is too uncertain and complex to warrant the ascription of any specific portion of the work to Sir William Alexander."<sup>3</sup> This is much too hesitating. There can be no doubt that, whatever share the King took in the work, the greater part was performed by the Earl.

The attempt made by Charles to foist his father's supposed Psalter on the Scottish Church was a most ill-advised proceeding. The Church was right in refusing to accept its manual of worship from any hands except its own, even although the King showed more wisdom in submitting the book to the judgment of at least some of the Presbyteries, in 1631, than he did six years later, when he tried to force both Service Book and Psalter on an unwilling people. There is little doubt that the Church saw an attack on its liberties in this attempt to make its members accept a Psalter in the preparation of which they had no part. "Few will deny," said the late Professor Cooper, speaking of the 1637 attempt, "that a tame acquiescence in a proceeding so outrageous would have been equally fatal to our civil liberties and to that authority in sacred things which the Church has received from her Divine King."

King James's Psalter was rejected along with Laud's Liturgy, and few, if any, have since had much good to say of it.<sup>4</sup> One recent writer tells us that it was "entirely obnoxious" to the people to whom it first came, while another, also still with us, says, "Its influence on our present collection may be pronounced negligible." The late Dr. Rankin, of Muthil, declared that this new Psalter "was found so fantastic that even the Bishops dropped it." Such statements, and more could be quoted,

<sup>1</sup> See Scottish Text Society Edition of his works, Vol. I, xii.

<sup>2</sup> R. M. Ferguson : *Alexander Hume*. 148.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. I, xiii. Baillie, writing in 1638, mentions the death of Lord Alexander (son of the Earl of Stirling), saying that he had lost a "near coosin and familiar friend." He adds that the Earl himself was "extreamly hated of all the countrie for . . . his urging of the Psalmes and Books for them." Many who intended the father's overthrow were "witholden for respect of" the son.—*Letters and Journals*, I, 77.

<sup>4</sup> It may be noted that neither in Grub's *Ecclesiastical History of Scotland* nor in Stephen's *History of the Scottish Church*, both of which are written from the standpoint of the Episcopal Church, is any reference made to this Psalter; although it was produced during the First Episcopacy.



show simply that the writers have not taken the trouble to examine the matter for themselves. "It has been," says Sir Walter Scott, "the bane of Scottish literature and the disgrace of her antiquities, that we have manifested an eager propensity to believe without enquiry." That has certainly been the case, so far as this Psalter is concerned.

The Rev. Thomas Young, Minister of Ellon, writing in a volume in the Guild Library,<sup>1</sup> of the rejection of the Service Book and Psalter, says, "Perhaps the latter deserved a better fate." Not very high praise, but the best I have seen accorded to the work. Mr. Tough, who edited the works of Sir William Mure of Rowallan,<sup>2</sup> can say no more for Alexander's Psalter than that it was even less popular among the people than the Reformation one.

Charles fell and this Psalter fell with him; but as we have seen, Alexander's work has not perished without memorial; for we still sing the praises of the Almighty in words which were taken from the rejected book, words which will be used so long as the Scottish Church remains true to her Metrical Psalms.

I may be allowed to express the hope that the investigation I have now made may help to a better and more sympathetic consideration of this attempt to amend what was admittedly lacking in the praise of the Scottish Sanctuary. We cannot forget that those who provided us with our present psalter considered it to be capable of providing much of the material to be used in the worship of God by the generations which were to come.

On the second day of October, 1929, the historic union of the Scottish Churches was carried through. After the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland had each been constituted in its own place of meeting, the members walked in procession to the High Kirk of Edinburgh (the Cathedral Church of St. Giles), there to join in a service of thanksgiving to Almighty God. Probably there were few in the whole gathering (if indeed there were any) who recognised in the opening Psalm of praise a remnant of the book which in that same church had been so ignominiously rejected (not to say ejected) in 1637, when Jenny Geddes threw her stool at Dean Hanna. Yet so it was. The first item of praise was the 147th Psalm, verses one to five, and words were sung which were only slightly different from those in the Psalter of King James.

<sup>1</sup> *The Metrical Psalms and Paraphrases.* 27.

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Text Society.

1. Praise ye the Lord, for it is good,  
praise to our God to sing,  
for it exceeding pleasant is,  
praise is a comely thing.
5. Great is the Lord and of great power  
his wisdom nought can bound.<sup>1</sup>

A little later the same day the two General Assemblies met in joint-session in the Hall of Assembly, Annandale Street, and after the Uniting Act had been adopted, the members sang Psalm lxxii, 18, 19. Here again the words recalled the Royal Psalter :

Now blessed be the Lord our God, even Israel's mighty God,  
who only doth true wonders work, which are renowned abroad.  
So the old book came into its own.

*Additional Note.*—In 1633, at the time of the visit of King Charles to Edinburgh, a number of ministers took it upon themselves to interview “ sundrie of the nobilitie, gentrie and burgesses ” (Members of Parliament) in order that consideration might be given to certain proposals which it was feared might have a bad effect on the Church. Among other reasons for this action, which we may regard as the equivalent of the modern “ lobbying,” was that it was believed that “ a new translation of the Psalmes in Meeter was to be imposed,” and the nobility and others were “ desired to consider that the Psalmes in Meeter, allowed by the Kirk of Scotland and usually sung since the Reformation, cannot be altered by inferior Assemblies of the Kirk or particular persons ; neither can it be remitted or committed to Synods, Presbyteries or certain selected persons, till there be a free General Assembly.”

It has again to be noted, that the objections had reference to the proposed method of introducing the new Psalter and not to the Psalter itself.

*Apologetic Narration of the State of the Kirk* (Wodrow Society), by William Scot (1558-1642), Minister of Cupar. 337.

<sup>1</sup> It should be said that this is one of the instances where King James has drawn on the Reformation Psalter.